United Nations E/CN.3/2001/9

Economic and Social Council

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Statistical Commission
Thirty-second session
6-9 March 2001
Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Economic statistics: Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics

Report of the Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics (Convener: Australia), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session.[1]

Points for discussion

2. The Commission may wish to:

(a) Discuss whether the mandate of the Expert Group is focused and its objectives are clear and attainable;

(b) Comment on the Expert Group's proposals for future work.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24), para. 1.

* E/CN.3/2001/1.

00-79694 (E) 190101

Annex

Report of the Expert Group on Capital Stock Statistics

Purpose

1. To clarify the conceptual issues underpinning capital stocks and flows.

2. To exchange research and experience related to the problems of capital stock and flow measurement.

Year organized

1997

Participants

Countries

Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

International agencies

International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Statistics Division, World Bank, Statistical Office of the European Communities.

Expert advisers

Erwin Diewert, Peter Hill, Charles Hulton, Dale Jorgenson, Jack Triplett.

Meetings

First meeting: Canberra, 10-14 March 1997

Second meeting: Paris, 29 September-2 October 1998

Third meeting: Washington, D.C., 8-10 November 1999

Topics considered

Measurement practices of participating countries; concepts of capital stocks and flows; practice and problems of perpetual inventory method; alternative approaches to measuring capital stock, primarily direct collection; commercial accounting issues; current price and volume measures; balance of fixed assets and capital stock estimation in transition countries; experience with multi-factor productivity; new measures of capital related to the extension of the asset boundary as recommended by the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA); balance sheet issues; and international comparability and cooperation.

Products

Documents and final reports of the 1997, 1998 and 1999 meetings are available on the web site (see below).

The Expert Group is developing a handbook on capital stock and flow measurement that covers both conceptual issues and suggested best practices in compilation. The handbook, which will be published by OECD, will be part of the reference documentation on the 1993 SNA.

Planned activities

The second draft of the handbook has been prepared. Expert Group members have until mid-November 2000 to provide comments, after which the handbook will be finalized and submitted for publication.

Expected future products (dates)

A handbook on the measurement of capital stocks and flows is expected to be published in the first half of 2001.

The Expert Group will continue to discuss, through its electronic discussion group database, concepts and practices in the measurement of capital stocks and flows. Depending on the outcome of these electronic discussions, it may choose to have a future meeting, although to date no meeting has been scheduled.

Point of contact

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Item 4 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Economic statistics: statistics of international trade in services

Report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (Convener: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session.[1]

Points for discussion

2. The Commission may wish to:

(a) Comment on the work accomplished by the Task Force for the finalization of the draft manual on statistics of international trade in services (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/86);

(b) Approve the manual as an international recommendation;

(c) Comment on the proposed phased implementation of the manual.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24, para. 1).

* E/CN.3/2001/1.

00-79661 (E) 230101

Annex

Report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

1. The Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services has produced a final draft of the proposed manual on statistics of international trade in services during 2000. The Task Force respectfully submits this final draft manual (PROV/ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/86) to the Statistical Commission for its approval as an international manual

2. The Task Force is convened by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and consists of members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Statistics Division, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Commission and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). In the preparation of the draft manual, the Task Force has benefited from the advice of a number of very experienced consultants and from the active help of some national statistics organizations.

3. The draft manual is designed to serve a broad spectrum of statistical needs but places special emphasis on those of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). As far as possible, it builds on rather than suggests modifications to existing standards for compilation, in particular the fifth edition of the IMF *Balance of Payments Manual* (BPM5) and the System of National Accounts, 1993 (1993 SNA). Nonetheless, the draft manual takes a broader view of international trade in services than the conventional balance of payments perspective set out in BPM5.

4. To be more specific, the manual provides a more detailed classification of services delivered through conventional trade between residents and non-residents than is contained in BPM5, includes a treatment of local delivery of services through a foreign commercial presence and takes a first step towards linking these two systems. The manual discusses various "modes of supply" described in GATS through which services can be delivered, and provides recommendations for a statistical treatment of these modes. Links to existing statistical frameworks are described and correspondences provided from the classifications used in the manual to the Central Product Classification (CPC), version 1.0, the International Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (ISIC), Revision 3 and the GATS services negotiating list. In a few areas, the manual identifies the need for further development work after publication. A more complete summary of the manual is provided in appendix I.

5. The manual proposes a phased approach to implementation of its recommendations so that countries, including those that are beginning to develop statistics on international trade in services, can gradually begin to structure available information in line with this new international standard framework. The sequence of recommended elements takes into account the relative ease that many compilers may find in their implementation. However, the order is quite flexible, so that countries can meet the priority needs of their own institutions. Full implementation — to be seen as a long-term goal — would represent a considerable increase in the detail of information available on trade in services but should be viewed as a compromise between the very detailed needs of users and the difficulty of data collection on trade in services experienced by compilers.

6. An extensive consultation and review process has been undertaken in the preparation of the manual. A chronology of that process is contained in appendix II. In addition to review by a range of expert groups and public availability of drafts on the OECD web site, a draft of the manual was circulated in November 1999 by the United Nations Statistics Division and IMF to the statistical organizations and central banks of all their member countries for a worldwide review. Copies were also sent to members of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics and other interested parties. Responses were received from about 70 countries and were on the whole very supportive, although some respondents warned that some of the data breakdowns suggested would be difficult to collect. On the other hand, a very few countries favoured a more ambitious approach.

7. In July 2000, the United Nations convened an expert group to review a draft of the manual and to recommend to the Statistical Commission the next steps to be taken in the preparation of the manual. The experts represented both users and producers of statistics, including national statistical offices, data

compilers, users from business and trade negotiators. Their conclusions are summarized below.

8. The experts noted the importance of the manual for the work on statistics of international trade in services, and commended the Task Force for its work in preparing the draft manual.

9. The experts recommended that the Task Force make a number of changes to improve the presentation of the manual, including final editing, before its submission to the Statistical Commission in 2001. These recommendations have been addressed by the Task Force and as far as possible changes accommodated in the final draft.

10. The experts requested that the Statistical Commission consider future actions, after publication of the manual, including a decision on which agency or agencies will be the international collector of data on trade in services and ways to further the implementation of the manual, as proposed below.

11. The experts also recommended that:

(a) A user's manual on data collection for international trade in services be prepared, supplementing already existing international compilation guidelines, which should have a priority in the medium-term plan for implementation of the manual;

(b) A procedure be put in place to assess the different phases of countries' implementation of the manual and record existing pilot projects for data collection. Information on methodological approaches and experiences should be accessible to all interested parties;

(c) Future development work focus on such areas as telecommunications, financial services, Internet-related services and movement of natural persons, and engage producers and users of statistics, including trade negotiators, business users and statistical compilers;

(d) The Statistical Commission encourage national statistical offices and central banks to allocate adequate resources for the successful implementation and further development of international trade in services statistics, as proposed in the manual.

12. The Task Force endorses these recommendations and invites the Statistical Commission to respond.

Appendix I

Summary of the manual on statistics of international trade in services

1. This first manual on statistics of international trade in services has been prepared to meet the needs of a variety of producers and users of statistics. A particular impetus for the preparation of a separate manual on statistics of international trade in services has been the recent tendency for international trade agreements to cover services as well as goods, and the need for statistics both to guide the negotiations relating to these agreements and to monitor the outcomes.

2. While the manual broadens the statistical definition of international trade in services, it does so by building upon rather than modifying internationally agreed standards for statistical compilation. It provides a framework and a set of recommendations that will allow for the provision of a range of statistics on international trade in services. These recommendations are summarized in chapter 1 and elaborated on in the remainder of the manual. Chapter 2 proposes the framework and describes its links to existing international standards and frameworks. Chapter 3 focuses on the compilation of statistics relating to resident/non-resident trade in services, building on the balance of payments framework described in the fifth edition of the BPM5. Chapter 4 recommends standards for compiling statistics on "foreign affiliates trade in services" (FATS), drawing to a considerable extent on the concepts and definitions of the 1993 SNA in a way that is consistent with the expected recommendations of the forthcoming OECD manual on economic globalization indicators.

3. The manual describes four modes through which services may be traded internationally. It does so by considering the location of both the supplier and consumer of the traded service. The first of these modes, mode 1 or "cross border supply", applies when suppliers of services in one country supply services to consumers in another country without either supplier or consumer moving into the territory of the other. Mode 2, "consumption abroad", describes the process by which a consumer resident in one country moves to another country to obtain a service. Further, enterprises in an economy may supply services internationally through the activities of their foreign affiliates abroad. This mode of supply, mode 3, is called "commercial presence". The last of these modes of supply, mode 4 or "presence of natural persons", describes the process of supply of service when an individual moves to the country of the consumer in order to provide the service.

4. The BPM5 framework contains, among other things, recommendations for the definition, valuation, classification and recording of resident/non-resident trade in services. By building on this framework, the manual recommends extending the BPM5 classification of transactions by type of service to provide more detail through the Extended Balance of Payments Services (EBOPS) classification. A correspondence table showing the relationship between the EBOPS classification, CPC, Version 1.0, and the GNS/W/120 list (the GATS list of services for trade negotiation) is included as an annex to the manual. This table assists in the provision of clear definitions of the various components of the EBOPS classification. Except for the treatment of construction services, the recommendations contained in the manual are consistent with BPM5. Thus, a country's balance of payments statistics will provide many of the data that are needed to implement the recommendations relating to the measurement of resident/non-resident trade in services. Recommendations are made in the manual on the attribution of resident/non-resident transactions across the modes of supply.

5. As well as providing services by way of trade between residents and non-residents of an economy (measured in balance of payments statistics), enterprises in an economy may also supply services internationally through the activities of foreign affiliates abroad. The manual recognizes this in its discussions on and recommendations for FATS statistics, which comprise the major part of the third mode of supply, commercial presence. Included are recommendations on (a) the selection of foreign affiliates to be covered (which follows the definition of foreign-controlled enterprises used in the 1993 SNA);[a] (b) the attribution of FATS statistics, including a discussion on attribution by activity and by product; and (c) the variables to be compiled. Although this is a less well developed area statistically than the balance of payments statistics, some FATS statistics for foreign-owned affiliates in the compiling economy may be found in or derived from existing statistics on domestic production, including national accounts

statistics based on the recommendations of the 1993 SNA.

6. The recommended basic FATS variables discussed in the manual are: sales (turnover) and/or output, employment, value added, exports and imports of goods and services, and number of enterprises. Additional FATS variables considered relevant are also identified. The definitions of these variables are drawn from the 1993 SNA.

7. For both resident/non-resident trade and FATS statistics, the manual recommends the compilation of trade by partner country.

8. Finally, one area in which the manual moves beyond existing statistical frameworks is the area in which services in one country are provided by individuals (described as "natural persons") from another country moving to the first country on a non-permanent basis to take up employment. This area, which is part of mode 4, is one in which countries have made commitments under GATS, and although some limited data are available from balance of payments statistics, there is a need for development of statistics in this area to supplement the statistics currently available on employment and migration of foreign nationals. Consequently, on this subject there is only limited discussion on and recommendation for compiling relevant statistics in the main text of the manual, but relevant issues are discussed more fully in annex 1 of the manual.

9. The manual proposes a phased approach to implementation so that countries, including those that are beginning to develop statistics on international trade in services, can gradually begin to structure available information in line with this new international standard framework. The sequence of recommended elements, as summarized in chapter 1, takes into account the relative ease that many compilers may find in their implementation. However, the order is quite flexible, so that countries can meet the priority needs of their own institutions. Full implementation — to be seen as a long-term goal — would represent a considerable increase in the detail of information available on trade in services, but should be viewed as a compromise between the very detailed needs of users and the difficulty experienced by compilers in collecting data on trade in services.

Notes

[a] This is implemented statistically as covering affiliates that are majority-owned by a direct investor.

Appendix II

Chronology of actions, consultation and review thus far taken by the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services for the preparation of the draft manual on statistics of international trade in services

Date location	*Activity*
1994	Request from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and UNCTAD to the Statistical Commission and resulting formation of the Inter-Agency Task Force. The purpose of the Inter-Agency Task Force is to strengthen cooperation between international organizations in the area of trade in services statistics and to promote the development of concepts and definitions and classifications.
1996	Drafting begins of the manual by the Task Force in order to meet the needs of GATS and other users.
1997	
February New York	Review of the report of the Task Force by the Statistical Commission.
22-24 October Washington, D.C.	Review by the IMF Committee on Balance of Payments Statistics of a report entitled "Concordance between the BPM5 classification of services, the Joint OECD/Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) Classification of Services, and the Central Product Classification: status report".
24 and 25 November Paris	Review of the manual by OECD/Eurostat expert group on international trade in services.
1999	
March New York	Review of Task Force activities by the Statistical Commission.
31 May-4 June Curaçao	Review of the manual by the United Nations Workshop on the System of National Accounts and Classifications, organized by the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Statistic and Economic Projections Division of the Subregional Office for the Caribbean of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and with the Caribbean Community secretariat, hosted by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Netherlands Antilles.
As of June	Successive drafts of the manual made publicly available, including placement on the OECD web site.
July Paris	Review of the manual by the OECD/Eurostat expert group on international trade in services.
27 September- 1 October Canberra	Review of the manual by the United Nations Workshop on Classifications, conducted by the United Nations Statistics Division in cooperation with the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and hosted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
November	Worldwide review: mailing of the manual by the United Nations and by IMF to all heads of statistics of national and international statistical offices and to offices responsible for the compilation of the balance of payment statistics. Over 70 national and international offices responded.

Date location	*Activity*
27-29 October Washington, D.C.	Status report of the work of the Task Force presented to the IMF Committee on Balance of Payment Statistics.
18 and 19 November Paris	Review of chapter 4 of the manual by the OECD Globalization Workshop.
2000	
March New York	Review of Task Force activities by the Statistical Commission.
10-13 July New York	United Nations expert group meeting to review the manual.
14-17 August Tianjing, China	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation seminar of statistical reporting on services trade: current status and latest development of the manual presented.
3 October Geneva	WTO seminar on services statistics: current status and latest development of the manual presented.
25 October London	Meeting of the United Kingdom Royal Statistical Society: current status and latest development of the manual presented.
20-22 November Paris	OECD international trade statistics meeting: current status and latest development of the manual presented.
11 and 12 December Paris	Meeting of OECD/Eurostat experts in trade in services statistics: current status and latest development of the manual presented.
27 November- 1 December Addis Ababa	Review of the manual by the United Nations Workshop on International Economic and Social Classification.

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Item 4 (e) of the provisional agenda*
Economic statistics: Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

Report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes (Convener: Canada), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session.[1]

Points for discussion

2. The Statistical Commission may wish to:

(a) Discuss whether the mandate of the Ottawa Group is focused and its objectives are clear and attainable;

(b) Comment on the Ottawa Group's proposals for future work.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24), para. 1.

* E/CN.3/2001/1.

00-79688 (E) 190101

Annex

Report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes

Purpose

The Ottawa Group was created to provide a forum for specialists to share their experience and discuss research on crucial problems of measuring price change. Without avoiding theoretical issues, the focus of the Ottawa Group is on applied research, particularly but not exclusively in the area of consumer price indices. Participants are specialists and practitioners who work for or are advisers to statistical agencies in different countries or international organizations.

Year organized

1994

Participants

Members of statistical offices of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the International Monetary Fund, the International Labour Organization, the Economic Commission for Europe and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development have attended at least one meeting, as have other experts or other countries.

Meetings (approximately annual)

Ottawa, 31 October-3 November 1994

Stockholm, 15-17 November 1995

Voorburg, the Netherlands, 16-18 April 1997

Washington, D.C., 22-24 April 1998

Reykjavik, 25-27 August 1999

Australia, 21-26 April 2001

France, 2002

Topics considered

Fundamental problems of measurement, particularly at the microlevel, have been constant themes. These include estimation (for example, the adoption of the geometric mean at the first step of calculation), sampling and the treatment of quality change in all its manifestations. Questions of bias were considered explicitly at the 1994 and 1997 meetings. The different requirements of indexes for different purposes, for example, between inflation measurement and for compensation, have been discussed at more than one meeting. Other topics covered include certain difficult areas of consumer price indexes, such as health and financial services, survey methodology and management, and the growing availability of electronic sales databases (scanner data).

In 1999, two main topics were discussed. The first topic, "Treatment of quality change in price indices for durable goods", was principally devoted to the use of different techniques and procedures dealing with quality changes in durable goods. The second topic, "Different concepts of price indices serving different purposes", was principally devoted to the question of whether consumer price indices — intended to measure inflation, escalate incomes or deflate personal consumption — should have the same philosophical base.

Products

Papers and proceedings of the meetings are published.

Planned activities

The Australia Bureau of Statistics is hosting the next meeting, to be held from 2 to 6 April 2001, and the Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques of France is hosting the meeting in 2002.

The general subject for the next meeting is "Price indices for services". Within this general subject area, the following two topics have been selected for presentations and discussion at the sixth meeting: "Price indices for telecommunications" and "Price indices for financial services". It is suggested that the meeting start with a presentation and discussion on one major conceptual problem. Presentations and discussions on a limited number of detailed price index problems would follow, devoted to the use of different concrete procedures and techniques.

Expected future products (dates)

The proceedings of the meeting include the papers, a summary of the discussion and a report of recommendations, where agreement can be reached.

The meetings focus on a small number of topics in order to concentrate the preparatory work and the discussion. Proceedings of the Reykjavik meeting are available on the Ottawa Group web site at:

http://www.statcan.ca/secure/english/ottawagroup/

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Statistical Commission
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Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda*
Economic statistics: Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (Convener: International Labour Organization), which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session.[1]

Points for discussion

2. The Commission may wish to comment on the activities of the Working Group.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24), para. 1.

* E/CN.3/2001/1.

00-79673 (E) 190101

Annex

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

1. Since its previous report to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session, the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (IWGPS) has met several times formally and informally to review progress on the preparation of the manuals on consumer price indices (CPI) and on producer price indices (PPI).

2. Work on the preparation of both these manuals has started, with agreement on a common outline and free exchange of information and relevant text between the two processes. Writing of draft chapters has started and the editing processes have been established.

3. The inclusion of an annex on purchasing power parties (PPP) in the CPI manual, as requested by the World Bank, was debated at some length by IWGPS. It was agreed that the annex, if included, should focus on the integration of data collection for CPI and PPP; the final decision would be taken after examining an initial draft of the annex.

4. The technical expert group on PPI had its second meeting in Madrid in September 2000, in conjunction with a meeting of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics. First drafts of seven chapters of the PPI manual were reviewed at this meeting.

5. The next meeting of the technical expert group on CPI is planned for January 2001, and will be devoted to a discussion of the draft first part of the CPI manual. The second part of the manual will be taken up at the March 2001 meeting.

6. As many of the authors of the CPI manual will be at the next meeting of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes planned for April 2001 (see E/CN.3/2001/11), on that occasion an informal meeting of the technical expert group on CPI will be organized to review the manual.

7. It is anticipated that first versions of the CPI manual will be available by spring 2001 and of the PPI manual by summer 2001.

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Natural resources and environment statistics: London Group on Environmental Accounting

Report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting, which is contained in the annex. The report is transmitted to the Commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session.[1]

Points for discussion

2. The Commission may wish to review the revision process for the System of integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA-2000).

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24), para. 1.

* E/CN.3/2001/1

00-79667 (E) 010201

Annex

Report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting

I. Introduction

1. In 1993 the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, published *Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting* (commonly referred to as the "SEEA", from an earlier title) as an interim handbook. In 1997, the Statistical Commission requested the London Group on Environmental Accounting to undertake a revision of the interim handbook. The purpose of the present report is to provide the Statistical Commission with an update on progress made during the past 12 months.

II. Management of the revision process

2. The SEEA revision process is managed by a team comprising the London Group Coordinating Committee, the individual coordinators for each chapter, and the SEEA editor (Anne Harrison, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)).

3. The international agencies that are expected jointly to publish the SEEA-2000 are Eurostat, OECD, the United Nations and the World Bank.

4. The current and former chapter structure of the SEEA-2000 is presented in the table below.

Table
Chapter structure of the SEEA-2000

New number	*New title (suggested)*	*Relation to existing chapters*
I	Introduction to SEEA-2000	1
II	An overview of the accounting structure	1B
III	Physical flow accounts	3A
IV	Integrating physical and monetary flow accounts	3B
V	Environmental protection and resource management accounts	4
VI	Asset accounts in physical and monetary terms	All theoretical parts of 2A and 2B
VII	Specific resource accounts	Resource examples from 2A and 2B. Minerals, forests, fish, land, water
VIII	Valuing degradation	5
IX	Applications and policy uses	6

III. Progress on the consultation and communication strategy

5. The public consultation process, as outlined in the last report to the Statistical Commission, has been followed in its broad outlines, if not in every detail. Although some delays were met in placing draft chapters on the London Group web site[a] for public comment, all the draft chapters have now been made available there and in international meetings. The comment that has been received — while not considerable — has proved useful in editing and further developing the revised SEEA. Details of the public consultation process are given below.

Placing draft chapters on the London Group web site

6. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 were posted on the Web on 1 May 2000, in time for the first round of public comment (June 2000). Substantive work was also done on chapter 5. However, because of the controversial

nature of the topic, the Coordinating Committee decided that further discussion was needed. A revised version of chapter 2, plus a first draft version of chapter 5, were made available on the web site in mid-August, in time for discussion at the meeting of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth (IARIW) in Krakow at the end of August. Chapter 6 was placed on the web site at the end of November.

Informing the public of the consultation process

7. A letter outlining the full public consultation process was widely distributed by the London Group secretariat in May. Recipients of the letter included governmental agencies, academics and professionals with an interest in environmental accounting around the world.

Public comment received via the web site

8. The Australian Bureau of Statistics acted as the focal point for receipt of public comments on the revised SEEA. To date, several sets of comments have been received from the public at large. The receipt has been duly acknowledged, and the comments have been given consideration in the editing of the manual.

Comments received at the IARIW meeting

9. At the IARIW meeting in Krakow, Poland, at the end of August 2000, a full session was devoted to the SEEA revision. The session was chaired by Anne Harrison and included presentations on chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, public versions of which were available in advance of the meeting. Responses were offered by six representatives of the London Group. The floor was then opened to questions from the audience, but despite the substantial attendance at the session, relatively few comments were made. They were, however, of good quality and were duly noted by the representatives of the London Group.

Comments received through United Nations regional workshops

10. Two regional workshops, co-organized by the Statistics Division, were held for the purpose of discussing the SEEA revision during the summer and fall. The first was organized in South Africa, jointly with the Natural Resource Accounting in Southern Africa project (funded by the United States Agency for International Development Regional Center for Southern Africa) and the Resource Accounting Network for Eastern and Southern Africa (funded by the Swedish International Development Agency). The second workshop was organized in the Philippines jointly with UNDP and the National Statistical Coordination Board of the Philippines, as part of the United Nations project "Strengthening regional capacity for statistical development in South-east Asia". The revised SEEA was well received by the participants in both workshops. The need for a more practice-oriented handbook, providing guidance on implementation issues to countries with little or no experience on environmental accounting, emerged.

IV. Progress in editing the text

11. The chapter coordinators continued to work on the draft until a meeting of the London Group Coordinating Committee in Washington, D.C., in April 2000. It was determined at that meeting that chapters 1-4 could be placed on the London Group web site for public comment, but considerable work remained on chapter 5.

12. Editing work began after the meeting and continued over the summer, although somewhat less progress than hoped for was made. Revised versions of chapters 2 and 5 were produced by mid-August, in time for discussion at the IARIW meeting. The revised chapters were placed on the London Group web site for public comment.

13. Work on drafting chapter 6 commenced during the summer. A first version was produced in the early fall and placed on the London Group web site at the end of November.

14. The Coordinating Committee and chapter coordinators met again to discuss the state of draft chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in mid-November at the offices of the Statistics Division. It was agreed that

there remained a number of outstanding structural and content issues to be addressed before the document could be presented to the full London Group for final approval. They involved moving from the six chapters originally planned to nine chapters — partly by dividing previously long chapters, partly by adding new material. It was agreed that editing would continue at a rapid pace until mid-December with the objective of producing a draft of sufficient completeness and quality to serve as the basis for discussion by the full London Group and the Statistical Commission.

V. Next London Group meeting

15. The London Group had planned to meet in full session in Voorburg, Netherlands, in mid-October 2000. As editing of the chapters progressed over the spring and summer, it became clear that the editing task was larger than originally anticipated. Moreover, reaching agreement on the more controversial aspects of the SEEA — in particular with respect to chapter 5 — proved (and continues to prove) challenging. By the end of August, it had become apparent that the draft chapters were not sufficiently advanced to form the basis of a fruitful full meeting of the London Group in November. At the suggestion of Statistics Netherlands, the London Group Coordinating Committee decided to postpone the Voorburg meeting so as to allow time for completion of the draft chapters to a state suitable for a full meeting. Currently, the full London Group meeting (which will include representatives from developing countries whose participation will be funded by the Statistics Division) is provisionally set for mid-February 2001. A final decision on the date of the meeting will be taken by the Coordinating Committee in mid-December on the basis of the quality of the chapters available at that time (see sect. III). If the meeting goes ahead in February, a report on the outcome will be made in the London Group's oral report to the Statistical Commission in March 2001.

Notes

[1] http://ww2.statcan.ca/citygrp/london/london.htm

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Activities not classified by field: international economic and social classifications

International economic and social classifications

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session with respect to the work on international economic and social classifications.[1] It provides an overview of how the recommendations of the Commission concerning international statistical classifications have been addressed since that session. Points for discussion are set out in paragraph 21.

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24), para. 1.

* E/CN.3/2001/1.

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I. Status of recommendations

A. Recommendations on international classifications made by the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session

1. At its thirty-first session (29 February-3 March 2000), the Statistical Commission:

(a) Endorsed the recommendations for future work on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), as outlined in the report of the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications and in the report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications (E/CN.3/2000/17);

(b) Noted that the concerns raised regarding the appropriate level of detail of an international classification had been determined by the need to allow for international comparison at aggregated levels as well as the need for detailed development of national classifications; the Commission also noted that a two-digit ISIC with regional adaptations could possibly serve these needs, and referred the matter to the Expert Group for further consideration (see paras. 8, 9 and 17);

(c) Recommended that the definition and use of alternate aggregations in ISIC receive more attention as a way to satisfy analytical needs of users (see para. 5);

(d) Emphasized the need for training materials, and noted the already existing support of member countries in that field (see paras. 19-20);

(e) Noted that during the revision process of ISIC, more attention should be given to the definition and use of statistical units and the definition of core units as building blocks (see para. 5);

(f) Also noted the ongoing efforts of the United Nations Statistics Division to make crucial information and materials available, such as provisional indices, using the Internet (see paras. 10, 11, 15 and 19);

(g) Further noted that, although currently focused on economic classifications, the Expert Group would also bring items relating to social classifications to the attention of the Commission.

B. Activities carried out in response to requests of the Statistical Commission

2. The following activities have been carried out in the area of statistical classifications since the thirty-first session of the Statistical Commission.

1. Meetings of the Technical Sub-group to the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications

3. The Technical Sub-group to the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications met twice after the thirty-first session of the Statistical Commission. The work programme at the two meetings followed the recommendations made by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications, which were subsequently approved by the Commission at its thirty-first session. No meeting of the Expert Group had been scheduled between the thirtieth and thirty-first sessions of the Commission.

2. Revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC)

4. The United Nations Statistics Division is currently preparing the drafts for the publication of the updated ISIC[1] and the Central Product Classification (CPC),[2] based on the decisions and requests made at the meetings of the Technical Sub-group.

5. The work accomplished for the update of ISIC in 2002 includes a revised introduction, extended and updated explanatory notes and new alternate aggregations for the information sector and the information and communication technology (ICT) sector. The introduction includes a revised section on statistical units and guidelines for the treatment of e-commerce. The structure of ISIC has been left virtually unchanged. Two ISIC groups (three-digit level) that were not subdivided before have been split to accommodate the needs for the new alternate aggregations. Two new divisions for the treatment of household production, for applications such as labour-force surveys, will be introduced.

6. As part of the work on the CPC update for 2002, the structure of CPC division 86 (Production services, on a fee or contract basis) has been reviewed on a conceptual basis. A new structure has been elaborated,

resulting in new divisions 86-89 to replace the existing division 86. The existing level of detail and the structure of the telecommunications products in CPC have been reviewed and replaced with a more adequate structure. A number of other problems such as advertising and leasing of rights to trade marks and copyrights have been addressed by the Technical Sub-group and elaborated in the draft for CPC.

7. The complete drafts for ISIC and CPC will be discussed and finalized by the Technical Sub-group at its meeting in March 2001 for final review by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications in June 2001. The publications will be presented to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-third session in 2002. Details for all proposed changes are available on the Classifications web site.

8. It is proposed to revise CPC and ISIC by 2007. The need for conversion of the existing international and multinational activity and product classifications will be the driving factor in this process. The United Nations Statistics Division will ensure that the needs of developing countries are considered through participation in Expert Group and Technical Sub-group meetings, as well as United Nations classifications workshops. The drafts for the revised classifications are scheduled to be completed in 2004 and to be presented to the Statistical Commission in 2005. This will ensure that the translated publications are available by 2007 for implementation. Information on proposals and updates will be posted on the United Nations Statistics Division web site throughout this process.

9. Discussions and work on assessment of the current situation and future options are already under way. This process includes a review of the existing links between the major activity classifications, involving the custodians of ISIC, the General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities (NACE) and the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), as well as studies for an appropriate level of detail for an international classification.

3. Classifications web site, Registry and hotline

10. The Classifications web site (www.un.org/Depts/unsd/class) has been restructured in order to facilitate user access to information and online products. Site statistics indicate that it has become a frequently used source of information for outside users.

11. The Classifications Registry, as part of the Classifications web site, continues to maintain a current database with classification problems relating to the implementation of ISIC and CPC drawn from the Classifications hotline and other sources. The United Nations Statistics Division has issued ad hoc reports to the Technical Sub-group on problems of interpretation and use of classifications recorded in the Registry by major users. Complete information about classifications maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division and relevant rulings, interpretations and proposals are posted on the United Nations web site and can be searched according to user needs.

4. *Classifications Newsletter*

12. Since the year 2000, the *Classifications Newsletter* has been issued three times per year and is translated into all official languages of the United Nations. The *Newsletter* is disseminated in print and in an electronic version which is posted on the Classifications web site and circulated through email to registered users. The *Classifications Newsletter* announces newly issued publications and technical materials related to United Nations statistical classifications and informs about updates, new rulings, revision plans for classifications and classifications meetings.

5. Correspondence tables

13. The "Manual on statistics of international trade in services" has been drafted by the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services established by the Statistical Commission in 1994. The Manual proposes a further elaboration and detailing of the classification of transactions by type of services as provided in the *Balance of Payments Manual*, 5th ed.[3] in order to form the Extended Balance of Payments Services (EBOPS) classification. Consequently, a newly prepared correspondence table is provided in the *Manual* linking EBOPS with CPC and with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) Services Sectoral Classification list (GNS/W/120). This new correspondence is intended to facilitate future statistical comparisons of services domestically produced with those that are internationally negotiated and traded.

14. Correspondence tables linking activity and product classifications, such as ISIC, Rev.3, CPC, Version 1.0, the Standard International Trade

Classification (SITC, Rev.3)[4] and the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)[5] have been revised and are available for distribution. The correspondence tables between the Provisional Central Product Classification[6] and CPC, Version 1.0, have been elaborated to reflect expressed user needs for detail and have been published. A correspondence table linking CPC, Version 1.0, and the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)[7] has also been published.

6. Classifications indexes

15. Responding to the recommendations made by the Statistical Commission and expressed user needs, provisional versions of alphabetical indexes have been made available on the Classifications web site and are distributed electronically upon request. This includes indexes for CPC, Version 1.0, and ISIC, Rev.3, in English, as well as for ISIC, Rev.3, in French. Work to improve these indexes is ongoing in cooperation with member countries.

7. International training programmes and development of training materials

16. In 2000, a United Nations training workshop on classifications for African countries was conducted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 27 November to 1 December 2000. The workshop was focused on the current implementation and use of national activity and product classifications and their relationship to ISIC and CPC in the Africa region.

17. The discussions and participant contributions were used to assess the current state of implementation and use of these classifications. Special user needs for countries in Africa were discussed and led to a number of suggestions and recommendations for future updating of the classifications. The necessary detail of ISIC in the areas of agriculture, fishing and mining was of particular concern. Participants also raised concerns about the treatment of a number of beneficiating activities, such as cotton ginning, in ISIC. These concerns need to be addressed in future revisions of ISIC.

18. Measures to facilitate cooperation in the field of classifications, including coordination of work on regional/subregional cooperation in classifications, were discussed. Based on the experience of Afristat (*Observatoire Économique et Statistique d'Afrique Subsaharienne*), subregional cooperation and capacity-building in the area of statistical classifications will be pursued by the participants.

19. All technical and training materials used at the United Nations classifications workshops are posted on the Classifications web site, so that their use is not restricted only to the time and venue of the workshop. These include presentations made by the United Nations Statistics Division and cooperating agencies, as well as contributions by participating countries.

20. Work is progressing on the preparation of an ISIC user's guide. The Technical Sub-group has discussed a first draft and given recommendations on refining the scope of the guide. The draft will be circulated for review, when the 2002 update of ISIC is finalized and the consequences are incorporated in the draft.

II. Points for discussion

21. The Statistical Commission is requested to express its views on the following questions:

(a) Does the Commission agree with the proposed work programme and time frame for updating ISIC and CPC by 2002 and for planning their revision by 2007?

(b) Does the Commission agree with the actions proposed by the members of the Technical Sub-group in respect of the scope of the changes to ISIC and CPC?

(c) Have the key players and users been satisfactorily included in the work related to updating, revising and implementing the classifications?

Notes

[1] *International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Third Revision*, Statistical Papers, No. 4, Rev.3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XVII.11).

[2] *Central Product Classification (CPC), Version 1.0*, Statistical Papers, No. 77, Ver.1.0 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.98.XVII.5).

[3] *Balance of Payments Manual*, 5th ed. (Washington, D.C., International Monetary Fund, 1993).

[4] *Standard International Trade Classification, Revision 3*, Statistical Papers, No. 34/Rev.3 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.XVII.12 and corrigenda).

[5] World Customs Organization, *The Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System*, 1996 version (Brussels, 1996).

[6] *Provisional Central Product Classification*, Statistical Papers, No. 77 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.91.XVII.7).

[7] *Classifications of Expenditure According to Purpose: Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG); Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP); Classification of the Purposes of Non-Profit Institutions Serving Households (COPNI), and Classification of the Outlays of Producers According to Purpose (COPP)*, Statistical Papers, No. 84 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.XVII.6), chap. III and part three.

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Existing statistical programmes in relation to selected United Nations special years and observances

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report reviews the following forthcoming special events: (a) Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; (b) review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; (c) follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing; and (d) comprehensive review of Agenda 21. For each event, the major themes are highlighted and the statistical implications of these events are analysed. The Commission is invited to take this information into account when discussing the agenda for its next session and its multi-year programme of work.

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I. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

A. Background

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/187 of 18 December 1997, decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was designated as the focal point for organizing the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which will be hosted by the European Union, in Brussels, from 14 to 20 May 2001.

2. The objectives of the conference are:

- To assess progress, at the country level, in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s,[1] adopted at the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was held in Paris in 1990;
- To review the implementation of international support measures, particularly in the areas of official development assistance (ODA), debt, investment and trade;
- To consider the formulation and adoption of appropriate national and international policies and measures for sustainable development of least developed countries and their progressive integration into the world economy.

3. Forty-eight countries are currently designated by the United Nations as least developed countries. The list is reviewed every three years by the Economic and Social Council on the basis of the following criteria:

- Low income, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita;
- Weak human resources, as measured by a composite index (Augmented Physical Quality of Life Index) based on indicators of life expectancy at birth, per capita daily calorie intake, combined primary and secondary school enrolment, and adult literacy;
- A low level of economic diversification, as measured by a composite index (economic diversification index) based on the share of manufacturing in GDP, the share of the labour force in industry, annual per capita commercial energy consumption and UNCTAD's merchandise export concentration index.

4. Different criteria are used for inclusion in, and graduation from, the list. Furthermore, the criteria themselves are reviewed periodically. For instance, the Committee for Development Policy has recommended that the economic diversification index be replaced by an economic vulnerability index reflecting the main external shocks to which many low-income countries are subject, and incorporating the main structural elements of the countries' exposure to the shocks, including their smallness and lack of diversification.

B. Statistical implications

5. At this point, UNCTAD has not informed the United Nations Statistics Division about any anticipated specific statistical implications of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. However, it is expected that an evaluation of progress in the implementation of the conference goals will require the measurement of relevant statistical indicators against established benchmarks.

II. Review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

A. Background

6. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (resolution 46/151, annex, sect. II) in 1991. The United Nations New Agenda represented an accord between African States and the international community, with each side committing itself to specific and far-reaching efforts to accelerate Africa's development process. Furthermore, in March 1996, the Secretary-General launched the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

7. The implementation of the United Nations New Agenda was targeted at several priority areas, including:

- Economic reforms, including the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources;
- Promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment (FDI);
- Intensification of the democratization process and the strengthening of civil society;
- A solution to Africa's debt problem;
- Trade facilitation and market access;
- Diversification of African economies;
- Agricultural production, rural development and food security;
- Environment and development;
- Regional and subregional cooperation and integration;
- South-South cooperation.

8. The United Nations New Agenda also accorded special attention to human development and increased productive employment, and promoted rapid progress towards the achievement of human-oriented goals by the year 2000 in the areas of life expectancy, integration of women in development, child and maternal mortality, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, basic education, and shelter.

9. The United Nations New Agenda had a built-in mechanism for the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards its full implementation. Two progress reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda were submitted to the General Assembly, in September 1998 (A/53/390 and Add.1) and in September 2000 (A/55/350 and Add.1). The Assembly, in its resolution 54/234 of 22 December 1999, also requested an independent evaluation of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda, to be conducted prior to its final review and appraisal in 2002. The independent evaluation and final review are being coordinated by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

B. Statistical implications

10. It is generally accepted that a systematic effort to collect as much information and data as possible from all African States and their development partners is essential both for the independent evaluation process and for the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda. OSCAL is in the process of identifying data areas and developing specifications for the type of information and data required for the final review. These are expected to include the following:

- Time-series of rates of economic and population growth since 1992;
- Statistics on poverty, education, health, environment and access to services etc.;
- Data on resource flows (ODA) into Africa.

11. Particularly relevant to the information and data requirements of the final review of the United Nations New Agenda is the capacity already built under the United Nations Special Initiative for data collection at the sectoral level. Progress reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations Special Initiative were presented in the spring of 1998, of 1999 and of 2000. These reports (E/AC.51/1998/7, E/AC.51/1999/6 and E/AC.51/2000/6) contain available information and analysis in a wide range of policy areas.

III. Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

A. Background

12. The International Plan of Action on Ageing[2] was adopted by the World Assembly on Ageing (Vienna, 26 July-6 August 1982) and endorsed the same year by the General Assembly in its resolution 37/51 of 3 December 1982. The Second World Assembly on Ageing has now been convened for 2002 on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the first World Assembly. It will be devoted to the overall review of the outcome of the first World Assembly, as well as to the adoption of a revised plan of action and a long-term strategy on ageing, encompassing its periodic reviews, in the context of a society for all ages (General Assembly resolution 54/262 of 25 May 2000, para. 1).

13. The International Plan of Action on Ageing recommended, among other things, that international action, both multilateral and bilateral, should focus on data collection and analysis, training and education, and research.

B. Statistical implications

14. The Commission for Social Development is the intergovernmental body designated to review and appraise the implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing every four years and to make proposal for updating it, as necessary. The recommendations and/or proposals made by the Commission regarding the monitoring of the implementation of the Plan and with specific relevance to data collection and analysis are summarized as follows:

(a) **Establishment of a permanent database accessible from the Internet**, of public policies on ageing, enabling continuous updating and access by Member States. The Government of the Netherlands provided the United Nations programme on ageing with technical support for establishing the database. A questionnaire aimed at collecting information for the database had been designed and sent in autumn 1999 to the governmental focal points on ageing, many of whom at that time were also the focal points for the International Year of Older Persons. The questionnaire included a section on ageing-related statistics such as:

(i) The average income per person at age 60 or over;

(ii) The percentage of the population aged 60 years or over that receive informal care at home;

(iii) The percentage of the population aged 60 years or over that receive professional care at home;

(iv) The percentage of the population aged 60 years or over in institutional facilities (for example, nursing homes, homes for the elderly and other institutional facilities);

(v) The number of places in institutional facilities per 100,000 persons aged 60 years or over;

(vi) Whether there are nationally recognized research centres dealing with ageing in the country;

(vii) Whether there are graduate training centres dealing with ageing-related issues (including centres for geriatric training).

One of the limiting factors of the review and appraisal exercise of the International Plan of Action on Ageing is the low response rate to the questionnaires by Member States; and another derives from problems in respect of the interpretation of questions by Member States, making it difficult to produce comparable data;

(b) **Household surveys, among other approaches, to be used by the Commission for Social Development** to support the review and appraisal process, although they have not been used so far;

(c) Exploration of the idea of elaborating an **ageing-related development index** (ADI) to complement the ageing-specific indicators currently being used, such as life expectancy (at birth and at age 60), dependency ratios, retirement ages, adult literacy rates, morbidity trends, use of long-term care facilities and, statistics on active ageing showing the extent of older persons' contributions to the socio-economic and cultural development of communities and their roles in the maintenance of families. A meeting of the Ad hoc Support Group for the International Year of Older Persons, held in May 1998, was devoted to this issue with responsible officials of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Statistics Division, and the Population Division and Division for the Advancement of Women of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. It was decided at that time that, owing to a lack of sufficient basic data in many countries, the introduction of an ageing-related development index would be premature.

IV. Comprehensive review of Agenda 21

A. Background

15. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992 adopted Agenda 21,[3] the Rio Declaration on Environment and

Development[4] and the Non-legally Binding Authoritative Statement of Principles for a Global Consensus on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests (Forest Principles)[5]. In addition, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[6] and the Convention on Biological Diversity[7] were also opened for signature. Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration in particular have served as a core reference for the global development agenda. The Commission on Sustainable Development was established by the Economic and Social Council in 1993, pursuant to a request by the General Assembly in 1992, with a mandate to review implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

16. The special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, held in 1997, reviewed progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and produced a five-year Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[8] focusing on gaps in the current international environmental agenda and strengthening the implementation of Agenda 21 in a comprehensive manner. The participants at the special session also committed to ensuring that the next comprehensive review of Agenda 21 in the year 2002 would demonstrate greater measurable progress in achieving sustainable development.

17. The General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session in 2000, decided to organize in 2002 the 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development at the summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development (Assembly resolution 55/199 of 20 December 2000). The Assembly also decided to call the review the "World Summit on Sustainable Development", and accepted the offer of South Africa to host the summit.

18. In the same resolution, the General Assembly also decided that in 2002 the Commission on Sustainable Development, acting as the preparatory committee for the Summit, should hold three sessions. At its first and second sessions, to be held in January and March 2002, respectively, the preparatory committee should undertake the comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Drawing upon the results of this review, the third and final substantive preparatory session, to be held at the ministerial level in May 2002, should prepare a concise and focused document to be submitted for further consideration and adoption at the 2002 Summit. That document should reinvigorate, at the highest political level, the global commitment to a North-South partnership and a higher level of international solidarity in the accelerated implementation of Agenda 21 and the promotion of sustainable development.

19. Also in resolution 55/199, the General Assembly invited relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations and international financial institutions involved with the implementation of Agenda 21 to participate fully in the entire 10-year review process, in order to reflect their experiences and the lessons learned as well as to provide ideas and proposals for the way forward for the further implementation of Agenda 21 in relevant areas.

B. Statistical implications

20. Agenda 21 addresses the needs for regular data and information in chapter 40 entitled "Information for decision-making" and in chapter 8 entitled "Integrating environment and development in decision-making", section D ("Establishing systems for integrated environmental and economic accounting"). Both chapters assign tasks for the United Nations Statistics Division in implementation. Accordingly, the United Nations Statistics Division has to participate in the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in the implementation of chapters 40 and 8 of Agenda 21.

21. In the area of environmental/economic accounting, the United Nations Statistics Division has produced, in line with the request of Agenda 21, the *Handbook of national accounting: Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting*,[9] commonly referred to as the System for Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA), and *Handbook of National Accounting: Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting: An Operational Manual*[10] co-authored with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The United Nations Statistics Division is currently working in cooperation with the London Group on Environmental Accounting on the revision of the SEEA; and on a handbook on integrated environmental and economic accounting for fisheries jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of

the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations University (UNU). The United Nations Statistics Division has also been active in national capacity-building by undertaking several country projects and by organizing several regional and international workshops jointly with UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank. Environmental accounting was identified as one of the priority areas for the United Nations in the report of the Secretary-General to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations (A/54/2000) entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", which recommended that countries consider implementing the SEEA in order to integrate environmental issues into mainstream economic policy.

22. Chapter 40 of Agenda 21 highlights the needs for data and indicators at local, provincial, national and international levels. Accordingly, the chapter involves a wide variety of actors. The core statistical implications refer to the development of indicators of sustainable development and the promotion of their use as well as to the respective data collection and assessment. Considering the actual situation in developing countries, all the mentioned activities require considerable strengthening in the national capacity.

23. The United Nations Statistics Division and Commission on Sustainable Development activities have supported the above-mentioned statistical goals. The United Nations Statistics Division has put efforts into the methodological developments and into the data collection of environment statistics and indicators. The Commission has focused on the development of the indicators for sustainable development. Country projects testing the proposed indicators have contributed to prioritization reflected in the core list of 58 indicators for sustainable development, for which new methodology sheets are also being prepared. The United Nations Statistics Division is compiling the Pilot Compendium of Environment Statistics and Indicators which will be coming out on a biannual basis and will also include the Commission indicators. The Compendium will be based on data from the United Nations Statistics Division Questionnaire on Environment Statistics and Indicators and on other international sources. As regards national capacity-building, the United Nations Statistics Division is preparing a Manual of Environment Statistics to provide countries with methodological guidance on how to develop basic environment statistics on a regular basis and how to assure their compatibility with socio-economic statistics. Regional workshops on data collection and indicator compilation will further strengthen national capacities to respond to both national and international demands for statistics and indicators.

24. Chapter 40 issues were discussed in the international expert group meeting held in Ottawa in September 2000. The meeting produced a list of specific recommendations of which several referred to the needs for (a) harmonization and coordination and (b) strengthening national capacities in the production of data and indicators for sustainable development. The ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its inter-sessional meetings will have the implementation of chapter 40 in their agenda in April 2001.

Notes

[1] See *Report of the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 3-14 September 1990* (A/CONF.147/18), part one.

[2] See *Report of the World Assembly on Ageing, Vienna, 26 July-6 August 1982* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.I.16), chap. VI, sect. A.

[3] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolution Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[4] Ibid., annex I.

[5] Ibid., annex III.

[6] A/AC.237/18 (Part II)/Add.1, and Corr.1, annex I.

[7] See United Nations Environment Programme, *Convention on Biological Diversity* (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

[8] General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

[9] Studies in Methods, No. 61 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.XVII.12).

[10] Studies in Methods, No. 78 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.XVII.17).

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Activities not classified by field: coordination of development indicators in the context of the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits

Activities and plans of the United Nations Statistics Division and the Statistical Commission in support of the harmonization and rationalization of indicators

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-first session.[1] It contains an update on the indicator debate at the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council in July 2000 and on the subsequent Council resolution (see annex I). The report describes the activities of the United Nations Statistics Division in support of the implementation of that Council resolution. These activities, inter ail, focus on developing an agreed process to rationalize and harmonize the various sets of conference indicators and on strengthening national capacity to produce relevant indicators for policy decision-making. As the Council has invited the Commission to take a lead role in acting as its technical advisory body on indicators and has requested a progress report on this topic for its substantive session in 2002, this report contains a proposed action plan for the period 2001-2002 (see annex II). Points for discussion are contained in paragraph 18.

[1] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 4* (E/2000/24, para. 1).

* E/CN.3/2001/1.

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I. Update on recent developments regarding conference indicators

1. At its substantive session of 2000, in July, the Economic and Social Council reiterated its interest in the topic of statistical indicators to follow up major United Nations conferences and summits held in the 1990s ("conference indicators"). After extensive discussions, the Council adopted resolution 2000/27, the text of which is contained in annex I of the present report. This resolution reaffirms the recommendations contained in an earlier resolution on indicators (Council resolution 1999/55 of 30 July 1999, sect. II) and takes up many of its themes. For example, the resolution calls for coordinated efforts by donors and international organizations in support of statistical capacity-building, and emphasizes the need for networking among international organizations to limit the number of common indicators in order to lessen the burden on Member States. However, the new resolution reflects a concern on the part of the Council about the speed of progress in this area when it urges the United Nations Statistics Division to accelerate the promotion of networking among national and international institutions. The Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of resolution 2000/27 at its substantive session of 2002.

2. The discussions leading up to the resolution clarified that the Economic and Social Council is concerned about three elements: (a) an integrated and coordinated follow-up to all conferences; (b) a balanced approach to monitoring conference commitments; and (c) a need for full participation and ownership of Member States.

3. With respect to the issue of integration and coordination, the Council invited all the functional commissions to review the reports of the other functional commissions, and their multi-year programmes of work, and to examine implications of forthcoming special events and years (see E/CN.3/2001/15 and E/CN.3/2001/L.5). As statistics and indicators are needed for all areas, they are regarded as an important integrating tool.

4. With respect to the balanced approach to monitoring conference commitments, the Economic and Social Council noted the progress achieved in developing basic indicators in developing countries. At the same time, it stressed the need to further develop indicators on means of implementation to evaluate progress towards conference goals in creating an enabling environment. Developed countries pledged to support developing countries' efforts to achieve conference goals in terms of both technical and financial support, and by working towards trade liberalization, enhanced financial stability and improved cooperation in the formulation of macroeconomic policies.

5. The third concern mentioned in paragraph 2 above entails the need for full participation and ownership of Member States in all stages of indicator development. These stages include conceptual and definitional development as well as provision of data. It is in this context that the Economic and Social Council turns to the Statistical Commission as its authoritative technical advisory body. In paragraphs 8 and 9 of its resolution 2000/27, the Council makes explicit reference to the Commission (see annex I). The Council is looking to the Commission to provide leadership in the field of conference indicators. The Secretariat suggests to the Commission that it consider three specific undertakings to provide the requested leadership. First, the Commission should conduct an in-depth technical analysis of existing conference indicators, including their statistical properties and their impact on national statistical programmes; second, it should make a recommendation regarding a limited list of development indicators; and third, it should develop and recommend to the Council a mechanism of statistical review for future proposed indicators. Section III contains detailed proposals on how this could be done.

II. Current United Nations Statistics Division activities in support of harmonization and rationalization of indicators

6. The United Nations Statistics Division continued to work with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) on the implementation of the indicator framework for the common country assessment (CCA) indicators. The 57 indicators of the CCA indicator framework cover all development sectors and are currently being used by United Nations country teams across the world to describe the national development situations. To better understand the impact on national

statistical systems of the requirements of the CCA indicator framework, the United Nations Statistics Division experts visited Cameroon, Turkmenistan, Viet Nam and Lebanon, to assess the quality and completeness of the CCA indicator framework in these countries. The United Nations Statistics Division is also working with UNDG on a general evaluation of the experiences in 37 countries that have used the CCA indicator framework since its formulation in April 1999. The results of this analysis will be presented to the joint session of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in January 2001 and will be available to the Statistical Commission as a background paper.

7. In general, it can be said that the work on the CCA indicator framework in countries has led to improved dialogue and partnerships between national users and producers of development information and the United Nations country teams. For many indicators data are still lacking or are outdated. In this context, the United Nations Statistics Division is documenting good practices where the statement of data gaps has led to renewed efforts of United Nations country teams to strengthen statistical capacity in countries.

8. The United Nations Statistics Division indicator web site presents information on metadata on indicators disseminated by the organizations of the United Nations system in the context of conference follow-up. The web site contains the following information for each indicator: definition, related conference, data collection and dissemination mechanisms. At the thirty-fourth session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities, the United Nations Statistics Division presented to its United Nations partners a simplified and redesigned format of the web site. There is now a fully searchable relational database underlying the web site. The information relating to the four initial participating organizations (the United Nations Statistics Division, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO)) has been adapted to the new format and a network of technical experts in all United Nations organizations has been organized.

9. Recognizing the fundamental importance of strong national statistical systems (see also E/CN.3/2001/24, annex, prepared by the consortium known as the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS 21), the United Nations Statistics Division has continued to support countries and regions in building their statistical capacity. There are three main vehicles that the United Nations Statistics Division uses in driving towards this objective. The United Nations Statistics Division continues its long-standing partnership with UNFPA in improving population statistics, particularly in the areas of the decennial census and civil registration and vital statistics. Despite financial difficulties, UNFPA continues to demonstrate its commitment in these areas. The second avenue is the United Nations Statistics Division's regular programme for technical cooperation. This provides for one interregional adviser in national accounts and one in informatics. Training workshops conducted in this biennium covered issues such as trade statistics (Latin America and Southern African countries), national accounts (Africa, Western Asia), dissemination and marketing of statistics as well as operation of statistical organizations (Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries), civil registration and vital statistics (Latin America), classification (Africa), disability statistics (Africa) and population and housing censuses (global). The third vehicle comprises the United Nations Development Accounts. The United Nations Statistics Division has two currently in operation, one with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries and one with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) (ASEAN) countries. A third programme has been recently approved in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

III. Proposed work plan for the period 2001-2002

10. It is proposed that the United Nations Statistics Division continue with its activities as described in section II above. Moreover, in order to comply with the Economic and Social Council's specific request for a report on indicators in 2002, the United Nations Statistics Division has elaborated a work plan for the

preparation of such a report, which is contained in annex II.

11. The activities outlined for the Statistical Commission in paragraph 5 above will require a considerable amount of technical work. The United Nations Statistics Division is of course committed to its responsibility as secretariat of the Commission. However, as one of the key concerns of the Economic and Social Council was country ownership of indicators, it is crucial to incorporate the technical knowledge and expertise of national statistical institutions into the process of preparing the next report to the Council commissioned for 2002. It is therefore proposed that the Commission approve the formation of a "Friends of the Chair advisory group on indicators". This network of national experts would be committed to providing feedback on technical material sent by the United Nations Statistics Division during 2001 and to meeting once to review and finalize the document to be submitted to the Commission at its 2002 session. Since the list of international indicators covers the entire range of human activities, it is recognized that no one group of experts can be expected to be knowledgeable in all areas. Therefore, it is recommend that the Friends of the Chair function as a group that would take the responsibility not necessarily for serving as the technical experts themselves but rather for finding the right experts.

12. To conduct the technical evaluation of the conference indicators, it is suggested that the statistical properties of the indicators be described in a matrix-type format. As a first step, the United Nations Statistical Division would present to the Statistical Commission as a background document a list of conference indicators. This list would be compiled in cooperation with the respective secretariats of United Nations conferences and summits. It would contain all indicators that had been explicitly mentioned in the conference documents or that had been identified subsequently by the secretariats as relevant indicators for measuring progress towards the respective conference goals. It may be expected that this list would contain several hundred conference indicators.

13. The second matrix dimension for the technical description of conference indicators would contain important technical attributes for each of the conference indicators. A preliminary proposal upon which the views of the Statistical Commission are sought contains the following elements:

(a) Conference relation;

(b) Policy concern (possibility of proxies);

(c) Definition (including required periodicity);

(d) Characteristics of national data collection (including methodologies used, cost, quality, timeliness);

(e) Approval by an intergovernmental body;

(f) Ongoing international data collection (if any);

(g) Availability of recent data;

(h) Global applicability;

(i) Reference for further information (publication, web page).

14. If the Statistical Commission agrees with this format, the technical inputs from the various United Nations agencies will be sought over the next months. The information already contained in the United Nations Statistics Division indicator web site is expected to be useful in this context. The Division will aim at sending to the Friends of the Chair advisory group on indicators a matrix pre-filled with as much information as possible by June 2001. The advisory group would then be invited to comment on the validity of the indicator descriptions and assist as needed in the completion of the matrix. As the list of indicators will contain elements from all development sectors (economy, environment, social and demographic sphere), it may in this context be useful if the members of the advisory group agree on a certain division of labour. An expert group meeting, planned for September 2001, would then finalize the matrix, on the basis of which the United Nations Statistics Division could subsequently prepare the document for the session of the Statistical Commission in 2002. After the Commission formally endorses the technical description of the conference indicators, it will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2002.

15. With respect to the recommendation of a limited list of indicators, the Statistical Commission seems to have basically three options. *Option 1*: The Commission, seeing itself as unable to make any recommendation in respect of a specific list to the Economic and Social Council, could limit itself to transmitting the technical evaluation of all conference indicators, which would contain some indications of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various

indicators. This would avoid a difficult selection process, but it might not satisfy the Council, in particular as the Council is concerned about the overburdening of countries. *Option 2*: Instead of defining a new core set, the Commission could choose one existing set, and critically review and build upon it. Potential candidates for such an approach would be the Minimum National Social Data Set (MNSDS), the CCA indicator framework or the core list of 58 sustainable development indicators elaborated by the Commission on Sustainable Development. The CCA indicator framework is broadest in terms of conference coverage, but it lacks the legitimacy of early country involvement. The general advantage of building upon an existing list is that important previous work would be incorporated into the effort and the risk of discrepancies between existing lists and a new Statistical Commission list would be reduced. *Option 3*: The Statistical Commission could develop and recommend its own limited list.

16. In order to address the issue of a limited list of indicators, a set of criteria for the selection of recommended indicators will be needed. The following set of criteria is proposed for the Statistical Commission's consideration: (a) ability of the indicators to measure the main conference goals and to respond quickly to changes; (b) cost-effectiveness, including the infrastructure needed for regular compilation; (c) availability of data for a sufficient number of countries; (d) degree of independence of the indicators in the limited set. Based on the discussion at the 2001 session of the Commission, it is suggested that the United Nations Statistics Division would work closely with the Friends of the Chair advisory group on indicators to formulate a specific recommendation to be adopted by the Commission at its 2002 session.

17. Finally, it is likely that new development issues will arise, and subsequently, that international goals will be agreed upon and measures for progress needed. The Statistical Commission needs to determine the degree to which it wants to be proactive, by suggesting to the Economic and Social Council a mechanism for statistical review of future proposed indicators. The format of the technical evaluation of currently used indicators, which was discussed above (paras. 12-13), could provide a model for such a mechanism. The Commission could volunteer to undertake at its future sessions a continued review of indicators by adding newly proposed indicators to the evaluation matrix discussed above.

IV. Points for discussion

18. The Statistical Commission may wish to address the following questions:

(a) Does the Commission agree with the interpretation of the United Nations Statistics Division regarding the work that is expected of the Commission by the Economic and Social Council?

(b) Does the Commission agree with the proposed work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division in support of the implementation of the Economic and Social Council resolutions? In particular, does the Commission approve the formation of a "Friends of the Chair advisory group", to be appointed by the Chairman of the Statistical Commission, to technically validate the conference indicators, to elaborate recommendations for a limited list of indicators and to make proposals for a mechanism of statistical review of future indicators? The group will be expected to present its findings to the Statistical Commission at its next session for approval.

Annex I

Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27 of 28 July 2000 entitled "Basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels"

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its decision 1998/290 of 31 July 1998 on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields and section II of its resolution 1999/55 of 30 July 1999 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on progress on basic indicators for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels;[a]

2. *Reaffirms* the important role that the functional commissions play in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to and evaluation of the implementation of the outcome of major United Nations conferences and summits;

3. *Also reaffirms* the recommendations contained in section II of its resolution 1999/55 and the importance of national efforts to build statistical capacity in all countries, including through statistical training, and of effective international support in this context for developing countries;

4. *Urges* countries, the United Nations funds and programmes, the Secretariat, bilateral funding agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional funding agencies to work closely together to implement these recommendations and to mobilize the required resources and coordinate their efforts to support national statistical capacity-building in developing countries, in particular in least developed countries;

5. *Emphasizes* that the indicators used by the Secretariat in the context of the coordinated and integrated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits should be developed with the full participation of all countries and approved by the relevant intergovernmental bodies;

6. *Calls upon* the United Nations funds and programmes, functional and regional commissions and specialized agencies to keep under review the full range of indicators used in their reports and information networks with full participation and ownership of Member States, with a view to avoiding duplication, as well as ensuring the transparency, consistency and reliability of these indicators;

7. *Requests* the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes, with the support of the Statistics Division of the Secretariat, to review as a matter of urgency the common country assessment indicator frameworks and report thereon to the Council at its substantive session of 2001;

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[a] E/2000/60.

8. *Invites* the Statistical Commission to serve as the intergovernmental focal point for the review of the indicators used by the United Nations system for the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits at all levels, and the methodologies employed in formulating them, including in the context of the elaboration of the common country assessment, and to make recommendations with a view to facilitating future consideration by the Council;

9. *Reiterates its invitation* to the Statistical Commission, with the assistance of the Statistics Division and in close cooperation with other relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and, as appropriate, other relevant international organizations, to review, with a view to facilitating future consideration by the Council, the work undertaken in harmonizing and rationalizing basic indicators in the context of the follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, taking fully into account the decisions taken in other functional and regional commissions and, in that process, to identify a limited number of common indicators from among those currently accepted and widely used by the States Members of the United Nations, in order to lessen the data provision burden on Member States, bearing in mind the work done so far in this area;

10. *Stresses* the need further to develop indicators on means of implementation to evaluate progress towards conference goals in creating an enabling environment for development;

11. *Urges* the Secretariat, in particular the Statistics Division, to accelerate with the support of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination the promotion of networking among national and international institutions in the area of statistics and in the development and application of indicators agreed to in the relevant intergovernmental bodies relating to the follow-up to the United Nations conferences and summits, in the context of its role as the focal point in the United Nations system in this regard, as well as to facilitate the exchange of relevant information and metadata between the United Nations system and Member States;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a progress report on the implementation of section II of resolution 1999/55 and the present resolution, for consideration by the Council at its substantive session of 2002.

Annex II

Proposed action plan for the period 2001-2002

December 2000-January 2001

In close cooperation with the secretariats responsible for conference follow-up, the United Nations Statistics Division will compile a "long list" of development indicators used in the context of conference follow-up. This list will be presented to the Statistical Commission at its session in 2001 as a background document.

March 2001

Statistical Commission to endorse action plan.

Formation of a "Friends of the Chair advisory group" (if possible short briefing of potential members of the group during the Commission session); discussion about leader of the groups of Friends of the Chair; suggestion: individual friends will be focal points for specific sectors (for example, economic, environmental, social, demographic, institutional indicators).

United Nations Statistics Division to solicit technical information/description on all indicators from various secretariats of United Nations conferences.

April 2001

Informal briefing of Economic and Social Council members on progress and decisions taken by the Statistical Commission at its session in 2001.

June 2001

United Nations Statistics Division to circulate to Friends of the Chair a first draft of the matrix, containing the long list of indicators and their technical evaluation. Friends of the Chair will review matrix with their sector specialists, and provide the United Nations Statistics Division with comments by August 2001.

September 2001

Three-day expert group meeting of Friends of the Chair (and other relevant sector specialists) in New York. Objective is to (a) finalize the matrix; (b) formulate a recommendation from the Statistical Commission to the Economic and Social Council regarding the limited list of indicators; and (c) suggest a mechanism for future review of future proposed indicators.

Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities meets in Vienna; to be informed about results of expert group meeting.

Informal briefing of Economic and Social Council members on progress and decisions taken by expert group meeting.

November 2001

United Nations Statistics Division to prepare document for the 2002 session of the Statistical Commission based on discussions at expert group meeting and ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities.

January and February 2002

United Nations Statistical Division to prepare first draft of the report to the Economic and Social Council to be circulated at the 2002 session of the Statistical Commission as a background document.

March 2002

The Statistical Commission at its 2002 session to adopt technical evaluation of conference indicators; to present recommendations regarding the limited list of indicators; and to suggest a mechanism for future review of future proposed indicators.

Following the 2002 session of the Statistical Commission, the United Nations Statistics Division, in close consultation with Friends of the Chair (and other relevant sector specialists), to finalize report to the Economic and Social Council based on the decisions of the Commission at its 2002 session.

April 2002

Submission of report to the Economic and Social Council.